

House Republican Press Release

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Cell Phone Ban Receives Final Legislative Approval



Legislation Cosponsored By Rep. Ryan Advances To Gov. Rell

On Thursday, June 2, the State Senate approved legislation cosponsored by State Representative John J. Ryan, R-Darien, that would ban use of hand held cell phones while driving in Connecticut.

House Bill 6722, An Act Concerning The Use Of Hand-Held Mobile Telephones And Hand-Held Mobile Electronic Devices By Operators Of Motor Vehicles, now goes to Governor M. Jodi Rell for final approval.

Beginning on January 1, 2006, the legislation will prohibit drivers from using hand-held phones unless they are communicating an emergency situation to an emergency response operator, hospital, physician's office or health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department. It would also prohibit drivers from using a mobile electronic device to perform any personal computer function, send or receive electronic mail, play a video game, view a digital video disk player, or take or transmit any digital photograph.

"It has taken several years to finally get this bill all of the way through the General Assembly process," said Rep. Ryan. "If you talk to our local Chiefs of Police, they will tell you that driving a vehicle and simultaneously juggling a cell phone in one hand while engaging in a conversation, is a dangerous, and has even proven a deadly combination. I am pleased that this legislation, which has broad public support, is now well on its way to becoming law."

Under the legislation, a first violation would be punishable as an infraction with a fine of up to \$75, a second violation by a fine of up to \$150, and a third or subsequent violation by a fine of up to \$250. Because only a first violation is designated as an infraction, and fines for subsequent violations are not designated for payment by mail, second or subsequent violations would require a court appearance.